

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05

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R 271642Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7474

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0243

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ZA

SUBJ: ZAMBIAN POLITICAL POT BEGINNING TO BUBBLE

1. SUMMARY. AN ELECTION YEAR AND A TROUBLED ECONORUY, COMBINED WITH THE RETURN TO POLITICS OF SIMON KAPWEPWE, HAVE MADE FOR GROWING INTEREST IN THE ZAMBIAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE. KAPWEPWE HAS BECOME THE FOCUS OF MUCH ATTENTION AND RUMORS ABOUND ABOUT HIS IMMEDIATE FUTURE, INCLUDING TALK OF HIS REPLACING KAUNDA. SOME SUGGEST THAT KAUNDA MAY USE HIS INFLUENCE, POSSIBLY UNDER PRESSURE, TO SEE THAT KAPWEPWE REPLACES GREY ZULU AS UNIP SECRETARY GENERAL. SUCH A MOVE COULD BE VIEWED FAVORABLY BY BOTH KAUNDA AND KAPWEPWE, WHOSE BASIC POLITICAL STRENGTH IS BECOMING CLEAR. THE GROWING ACTIVITIES OF MILITARY FORCES--ZAMBIAN AND ZAPU--REMAIN AN UNKNOWN FACTOR IN THE POLITICAL EQUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. AS ZAMBIA ENTERS WHAT IS SCHEDULED TO BE AN ELECTION

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YEAR, INTERNAL POLITICS ARE BEGINNING TO ASSUME AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE AND BRING FORTH INTRIGUING RUMORS. THE SCENE HAS BEEN MADE MORE INTERESTING BY THE RETURN TO ACTIVE POLITICS OF FORMER VICE PRESIDENT SIMON KAPWEPWE AND HIS FOLLOWERS FROM THE NOW-BANNED UNITED PROGRESSIVE PARTY (UPP). KAPWEPWE AND HIS LIEUTENANTS RETURNED TO THE UNITED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (UNIP)

FOLD LAST FALL WITH PROTESTATIONS OF LOYALTY TO PARTY, GOVERNMENT, AND KAUNDA. THEIR PLEDGES OF SUPPORT, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY HAVE DONE LITTLE TO ASSUAGE FEARS OF UPP-TYPE MACHINATIONS AMONG UNIP STALWARTS, AND REPORTS OF SUSPICIOUS "DARK CORNER MEETINGS" ARE FREQUENTLY AIRED.

3. KAPWEPWE IS SERVING AS FOCAL POINT FOR SOME ZAMBIANS WHO ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT STATE OF THE NATION, ESPECIALLY BUSINESSMEN WHO ARE INCREASINGLY FEELING THE ECONOMIC PINCH, AND AMONG THE BEMBAS WHO FORM HIS NATURAL CONSTITUENCY, BUT ALSO INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE UNIP CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. ONE STORY CURRENTLY MAKING THE ROUNDS CONTENDS THAT AN INFORMAL COALITION OF SEVERAL KEY POLITICAL PERSONALITIES REPRESENTING MAJOR PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAVE DECIDED TO BACK KAPWEPWE FOR A HIGH POSITION IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT, AND, AS SOME TELL IT, EVEN CHALLENGE KAUNDA'S LEADERSHIP. THIS HIGH-POWERED GROUP REPORTEDLY INCLUDES HUMPHREY MULEMBA, ELIJAH MUDENDA, JOHN MWANAKATWE, AXON SOKO, ALEXANDER CHIKWANDA AND ARTHUR WINA, WITH PRIME MINISTER MAINZA CHONA LENDING A SYMPATHETIC EAR.

4. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AT LEAST, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT KAUNDA WOULD BE SO CHALLENGED, BUT A PUSH FOR A RESPONSIBLE POSITION FOR KAPWEPWE MAY NOT ONLY BE PLAUSIBLE BUT PROBABLE. THE POSITION MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT OF PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL, THE NUMBER TWO POSITION IN THE ZAMBIAN POLITICAL HIERARCHY. SUCH A MOVE WOULD HAVE ATTRACTION FOR KAUNDA. IT WOULD MEAN (1) REMOVING GREY ZULU FROM THE POST, WHO DESPITE HIS COMPLETE LOYALTY TO THE PRESIDENT, HAS CLEARLY BECOME A DEADWEIGHT UNABLE TO REJUVENATE A FALTERING UNIP, AND (2) IT WOULD BRING KAPWEPWE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE TOP TO ENABLE KAUNDA TO KEEP TIGHTER CONTROL OVER HIM. FOR KAPWEPWE, SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT ONLY IMMEDIATELY PLACE HIM IN A POSITION OF POWER, BUT IT WOULD ALSO PROVIDE HIM WITH THE OPPORTUNITY AND MECHANISM FOR PAVING THE WAY FOR A POTENTIAL MOVE FOR THE TOP SPOT.

5. ON A LARGER POLITICAL SCALE, A DECISION TO BRING KAPWEPWE FULLY BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF POWER WOULD RESULT IN YET ANOTHER REALIGNMENT OF POLITICAL FORCES IN ZAMBIA. KAUNDA'S KEY TO CONTROL SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN HIS ABILITY TO BALANCE BASIC CONTENDING FORCES. THE LAST MAJOR REALIGNMENT FOLLOWED THE FALL OF KAPWEPWE AND THE BANNING OF THE BEMBA-SUPPORTED UPP IN 1971-72, WHEN EASTERNERS WERE GIVEN A GREATER DEGREE OF INFLUENCE. SINCE THAT TIME, HOWEVER, KAUNDA HAS DISMISSED ONE AFTER ANOTHER

OF THESE DRAWN FROM THE EAST (AMOCK PHIRI, RUPIAH BANDA, AXON SOKO) AND IN EFFECT RECREATED AN IMBALANCE. THE RENEWED BEMBA SUPPORT BROUGHT BY KAPWEPWE, AND BACKED BY THE BROAD-BASED GROUP MENTIONED EARLIER, ONCE AGAIN WOULD CREATE THE WIDE NATIONAL BASE ON WHICH KAUNDA AND UNIP HAVE RESTED.

6. THE MECHANICS OF SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE SMOOTH. DESPITE HIS LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE AS SECRETARY GENERAL, GREY ZULU STILL MAINTAINS SOME CLOUT WITHIN THE PARTY (WITNESS HIS REPORTED ROLE IN THE SACKING OF AARON MILNER), AND DOUBTLESS HAS HIS OWN CIRCLE OF LOYALISTS AND SUPPORTERS. HE HAS SOME POPULARITY WITH THE PARTY'S MORE RADICAL MEMBERS BECAUSE OF THE STRONG SOCIALIST IDEOLOGICAL  
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STAND HE AFFECTS. AN INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE COULD RESULT IN HIS COMING OUT ON TOP AND ACTUALLY GAINING AN ENHANCED DEGREE OF INFLUENCE (AND KAPWEPWE ARRESTED AGAIN). WE WOULD JUDGE, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO LOSE BECAUSE SUPPORT FOR HIM SEEMS RATHER THIN, NOTWITHSTANDING HIS CLOSE TIES TO KAUNDA (WHO ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION HAS DUMPED A "FRIEND").

7. PERHAPS THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THE RUMORS OF MACHINATIONS IS THE DEGREE OF AUTHORITY AND SUPPORT WHICH KAPWEPWE ENJOYS AFTER "N EXTENDED PERIOD IN THE POLITICAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 0243

WILDERNESS. HIS STATUS IS PARTIALLY A PRODUCT OF THE CONCERN, DISSATISFACTION, AND UNDERLYING UNREST OVER THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN ZAMBIA. AS IN ANY SOCIETY, QNXESE FACTORS GENERATE A SEARCH FOR CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT. THAT THOSE SEARCHING TURN SO READILY TO KAPWEPWE DEMONSTRATES HIS STAYING POWER, BASIC POLITICAL ACUMEN, STRENGTH, AND THAT, GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF TRULY STRONG POLITICAL FIGURES IN ZAMBIA, THERE IS NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.

8. THE COMING YEAR SHOULD SEE A GOOD AMOUNT OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING WHICH COULD LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES BOTH IN UNIP AND THE GOVERNMENT. KAUNDA UNDOUBTEDLY REALIZES THAT THE STRESSES AND STRAINS WITHIN THE BODY POLITIC MUST BE DEALT WITH IF HE IS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL, AN EXPEDIENT

AND SHORT-TERM SOLUTION WOULD BE TO "POSTPONE" THE ELECTIONS DUE THIS YEAR, AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED. AT THIS STAGE IT APPEARS MORE LIKELY THAT ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE, BUT THEY MAY BE PRECEDED BY WHAT COULD BE A MAJOR REALIGNMENT  
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OF POLITICAL FORCES.

9. A FACTOR WHICH SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED IS THE MILITARY. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO REASON TO SUSPECT ITS LOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, SHOULD THE ECONOMY, THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE, OR THE RHODESIAN BORDER SITUATION DRASTICALLY DETERIORATE, IT WOULD NOT BE BEYOND THE MILITARY TO INTRUDE IN AN ATTEMPT TO "SET THINGS RIGHT," AS HAS HAPPENED IN MANY AFRICAN STATES. ADDITIONALLY, THERE IS THE ELEMENT OF A LARGE, ARMED, FOREIGN FORCE--ZAPU'S ARMY--IN THE COUNTRY WHICH COULD HAVE AN UNPREDICTABLE IMPACT ON ZAMBIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. UNDER PRESENT AND FORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL ACTION WILL PROBABLY REMAIN IN THE CIVILIAN REALM.  
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## Message Attributes

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